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U.S. - CHINA RELATIONS: VIEW FROM EACH SIDE

PEKING IS DUBIOUS ABOUT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

BY FOX BUTTERFIELD

HONG KONG, NOV 29 - WHEN PRESIDENT FORD ARRIVES IN PEKING MONDAY HE WILL ENCOUNTER A CHINESE LEADERSHIP THAT IS MORE DUBIOUS ABOUT, IF NOT DISAPPOINTED WITH, ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE PRESIDENT NIXON'S EPOCHAL VISIT THREE YEARS AGO.

THE CHINESE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT MR. FORD'S ALREADY-SHORTENED FOUR-DAY TRIP WILL LEAD TO SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS.

UNLIKE MR. NIXON, WHO DEALT WITH THE URBANE, SOPHISTICATED PRIME MINISTER, CHOU EN-LAI, MR. FORD WILL FIND A NEW NEGOTIATING PARTNER, TENG HSIAPING, THE BLUNT, TOUGH SENIOR DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER.

IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WITH MR. CHOU SERIOUSLY ILL AND CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG IN QUESTIONABLE HEALTH, MR. TENG HAS EMERGED AS THE FUNCTIONING LEADER, MOVING RAPIDLY, HE HAS INSTALLED A SURPRISINGLY LARGE NUMBER OF HIS LONG-TIME SUPPORTERS IN KEY POSTS, MANY OF THEM, LIKE HIMSELF, REMABILITATED AND, WITH THE APPARENT BLESSING OF MR. MAO AND MR. CHOU, HAS GUIDED CHINA INTO A PREOCCUPATION WITH THE MODERATE, PRAGMATIC GOALS OF STABILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, RELEGATING IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGNS TO MENOR STATUS. AT A RECENT NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE, AT WHICH THE NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN, TO BEGIN IN 1976, WAS DISCUSSED,

*****WHEN COMMENT*****

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CHINESE LEADERS HEADED BY MR. TENG INDICATED THAT IT WOULD STRESS SUCH MUNDANE MATTERS AS GREATER FARM MECHANIZATION, INCREASED OUTPUT AND MORE PARTY CONTROL.

"THE EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR HAVE ALMOST BEEN A REPUDIATION OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION," SAID AN ANALYST HERE IN LOOKING OVER MR. TENG'S HANDIWORK.

WHETHER MR. TENG'S MORE DIRECT STYLE AND HIS RELATIVE LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH WESTERNERS WILL AFFECT MR. FORD'S VISIT IS UNCLEAR. IN ANY EVENT PEKING HAS INDICATED A CERTAIN UNHAPPINESS WITH WASHINGTON IN TWO KEY POLICY AREAS. FOR ONE THING, DESPITE MR. NIXON'S PLEDGE, MADE IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE ENDING HIS VISIT IN FEBRUARY 1972, TO MOVE TOWARD AN EVENTUAL UNITED STATES WITHDRAWAL FROM TAIWAN THERE IS STILL AN EMBASSY IN TAIPEI. THERE ARE STILL 2,000 UNITED STATES TROOPS ON TAIWAN, MOSTLY COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL.

LESS VALUE AS BUFFER

EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THE VALUE OF THE UNITED STATES AS A BUFFER AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, OF WHICH THE CHINESE HARBOR AN ALMOST DIABOLIC FEAR, HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY LESSENED IN CHINESE EYES BY THE HUMILIATING AMERICAN DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA LAST SPRING. MR. FORD'S EFFORTS TO PURSUE DETENTE WITH THE RUSSIANS AND HIS UN CEREMONIOUS DISMISSAL OF JAMES R. SCHLESINGER A MAN WHOM THE CHINESE CAME TO REGARD HIGHLY FOR HIS TOUGH ANTI-SOVIET LINE, HAVE ONLY ADDED TO PEKING'S DOUBTS. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO CREEP INTO THE OFFICIAL DIALOGUE.

IN AN UNUSALLY FROSTY TOAST AT A BANQUET MARKING SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER'S VISIT TO CHINA IN OCTOBER, FOREIGN MINISTER CHIAO KUANHUA WARNED HIM: "THE STARK REALITY IS NOT THAT DETENTE HAS DEVELOPED TO A NEW STAGE BUT THAT THE DANGER OF A NEW WORLD WAR IS MOUNTING."

THIS WEEK, PERHAPS IN PREPARATION FOR PRESIDENT FORD'S ARRIVAL, THE CHINESE PRESS CARRIED SEVERAL PESSIMISTIC ANALYSES OF THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY AND A LONG COMMENTARY ON SOVIET AMBITIONS.

"IN THE VOCABULARY OF THE NEW CARS, THE TERM DETENTE HAS A PECULIAR MEANING," THE CHINESE PRESS AGENCY, HSIENHUA SAID, "IT MEANS THAT THE WEST SHOULD WILLINGLY PROVIDE THEM WITH MONEY, TECHNOLOGY AND GRAIN TO AUGMENT THEIR CAPABILITY IN THEIR QUEST FOR WORLD DOMINATION."

OPEN COMPLAINTS UNLIKELY

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THE CHINESE ARE PROBABLY TOO FAR ALONG IN THEIR DISPUTE WITH THE RUSSIANS, AND ARE TOO SOPHISTICATED, TO COMPLAIN OPENLY TO PRESIDENT FORD ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE AS AMERICAN SHORTCOMINGS. BUT MR. FORD MAY BE IN FOR A PRIVATE LECTURE SINCE THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS, ESPECIALLY CHAIRMAN MAO, OFTEN SEE THEMSELVES, IN THE CHINESE TRADITION, AS TEACHERS.

ON MR. KISSINGER'S VISIT IN OCTOBER THE CHAIRMAN TALKED WITH HIM FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS, MUCH OF IT REPORTEDLY ABOUT THE SOVIET DANGER. THE ANALYSTS HERE BELIEVE PEKING'S STRESS ON THE IMMINENCE OF ANOTHER WORLD WAR IS PURE CHAIRMAN MAO AND SHOWS THAT HE STILL SETS THE BROAD SWEEP OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY DESPITE HIS AGE, 81 AND AN EVIDENT SPEECH PROBLEM.

BECAUSE OF IT HE REPORTEDLY NEEDS TWO INTERPRETERS, ONE, HIS NIECE WANG HAIJUNG, TO PUT HIS WORDS INTO COHERENT SOUNDS, AND A SECOND TO TRANSLATE THEM INTO ENGLISH.

SIGNIFICANTLY, MR. TENG WAS PRESENT AT THE TALK WITH MR. KISSINGER, AS HE HAS BEEN AT ALMOST ALL OF MR. MAO'S MEETINGS WITH FOREIGNERS OVER THE PAST YEAR. TO THE ANALYSTS THAT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE CHAIRMAN BITTERLY DENOUNCED MR. TENG DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND GUIDED HIS FALL INTO DISGRACE.

A DOUR MAN UNUSUALLY SHORT IN STATURE, MR. TENG DID NOT REAPPEAR UNTIL APRIL 1973 AFTER MR. NIXON'S VISIT. HIS REISE SINCE THEN HAS BEEN RAPID - DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY AND CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES.

IT HAS BEEN WIDELY ASSUMED THAT THE ARCHITECT OF HIS ASCENDANCY WAS MR. CHOU, WHO IS SAID TO HAVE DISCERNED IN HIM AN ABILITY TO MASTER CHINA'S ENORMOUS BUREAUCRACY DURING THE TRANSITION AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF MR. MAO AND MR. CHOU. IF SO MR. CHOU ALSO HELPED PROMOTE ANOTHER KEY FIGURE WHOM PRESIDENT FORD IS LIKELY TO MEET, CHANG CHUNCHIAO, SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS ONCE THOUGHT TO BE A RADICAL LEADER FROM SHANGHAI.

WHETHER BY MR. TENG'S DESIGN OR NOT, MOST OF THE OTHER PROMINENT RADICALS WHO ONCE LABELED HIM A FREAK HAVE BEEN IN ECLIPSE.

ANOTHER ACTIVIST ECLIPSED

CHIANG CHING, CHAIRMAN MAO'S CONTROVERSIAL WIFE, HAS REPORTEDLY COME UNDER CRITICISM FOR DISCLOSING PARTY SECRETS TO AN AMERICAN SCHOLAR AND HAS MADE FEW PUBLIC APPEARANCES THIS YEAR. WANG HUNG-WEN, A YOUTHFUL ACTIVIST WHOM CHAIRMAN MAO MADE DEPUTY

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CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY TWO YEARS AGO, HAS APPARENTLY BEEN RESTRICTED TO SHANGHAI.

IN THEIR ABSENCE MR. TENG HAS NAMED FOUR PROVINCIAL PARTY FIRST SECRETARIES THIS FALL: LIANGNING, SHANXI; KHANGTUNG AND YUNNAN- WHO EITHER ARE VETERANS CLOSE TO HIM OR SUFFERED FATES SIMILAR TO HIS IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, CHAIRMAN MAO'S EFFORT TO PURGE AND REVITALIZE THE PARTY, WHICH DISRUPTED THE COUNTRY. MR. TENG HAS ALSO HELPED PLACE HALF A DOZEN OTHER SUCH MEN IN THE CRITICAL POST OF POLITICAL COMMISSAR IN THE LARGE MILITARY REGIONS.

"EVERYONE WHO HAS SEEN HIM RECENTLY NOTES HIS CONFIDENCE, LIKE THE MAN IN CHARGE," A WESTERN DIPLOMAT SAID OF MR TENG.

MR. TENG'S VIEWS ON RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE NOT APPARENT, BUT THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE CANDID. WHEN THE UNITED STATES FREIGHTER THE MAYAGUEZ WAS SEIZED BY CAMBODIANS LAST MAY AND PRESIDENT FORD ORDERED ITS RECOVERY BY FORCE, MR. TENG HAPPENED TO BE IN PARIS, ANSWERING A NEWSMAN'S QUESTION ABOUT WHAT HE WOULD DO IN RESPONSE HE SAID, "THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO."

AMERICAN DIPLOMATS SOMETIMES SEEM TO BE LESS FRANK ABOUT UNITED STATES-CHINESE TIES. A PREVALENT VIEW AMONG THESE DIPLOMATS, WHO HAVE BEEN INSISTING THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG, IS THAT MR. TENG WILL NOT PRESS MR. FORD ON THE TAIWAN QUESTION BECAUSE, AS ONE PUT IT, THE CHINESE ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER.

IN THEIR VIEW THE CHINESE HAVING A STRONG SENSE OF HISTORY, ARE WILLING TO WAIT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO BREAK ITS TIES. PEKING IS THOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND MR. FORD'S PROBLEM WITH THE REPUBLICAN RIGHT WING AND PERHAPS CAN EVEN IGNORE THE APPOINTMENT LAST YEAR OF LEONARD UNGER, A CONSERVATIVE SENIOR DIPLOMAT, TO BE THE AMBASSADOR, AND, EQUALLY, AMERICAN MILITARY CREDITS TO HELP THE NATIONALISTS BEGIN PRODUCING THEIR OWN UP-TO-DATE JET FIGHTERS AND HELICOPTERS.

PUSHED FURTHER, THE DIPLOMATS MAINTAIN THAT PEKING HAS NO CHOICE SINCE IT WILL NEVER GO BACK TO THE RUSSIANS. THE CHINESE DID HINT TO THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES AFTER THE END OF THE INDOCHINA WAR THAT THEY DID NOT OPPOSE THE CONTINUATION OF UNITED STATES BASES IN THE TWO COUNTRIES- FOR CHINA FEARS SOVIET EXPANSION IN SOUTH ASIA., PERHAPS ABETTED BY NORTH VIETNAM.

THIS AMERICAN ASSESSMENT IGNORES EVIDENCE THAT PEKING HAS NOT BEEN HAPPY. THERE WAS THE COOL RECEPTION FOR MR. KISSINGER

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ON HIS VISIT IN 1974 AND THE LECTURING ON HIS LATEST TRIP, PRIME MINISTER CHOU, IN HIS LAST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE SUBJECT, AT THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' CONGRESS IN JANUARY, SAID THAT RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE IF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE WERE "CARRIED OUT IN EARNEST."

A CHINESE REPRESENTATIVE IN HONG KONG WHO IS SCRUPULOUSLY CAUTIOUS IN HIS COMMENTS SAID CHINA WAS NOT EXACTLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE UNITED STATES.

"WE AREN'T DISAPPOINTED," HE SAID, "BECAUSE WE NEVER HAD ANY ILLUSIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE."

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